

The Immigrant Farmer. Most of the first settlers in America belonged to the middle class. They were artisans, traders, farmers and mechanics. Those who came to York County were largely farmers of three different nationalities,—English, German and Scotch-Irish, each of whom coming from a different country, had their own peculiar modes of tilling the soil. Some of these people had remained for a time in Chester and Lancaster Counties; especially was this the case with the English Friends and the Scotch. Many Germans and Swiss came direct from their native lands to York County. Religious persecution and internecine wars were largely the cause of their emigration. Hence they came to America with noble aims and, generally, were of high moral character. There may have been exceptions, but the immediate prosperity that attended them faithfully illustrates that they were thrifty and industrious. Great wealth in European countries, then, was rare, except among the nobility. The gentry and the warrior did not emigrate, but the working and business classes did. Some of them were not farmers when they came here, but the necessity of the case made them farmers. They were a class of men who were to work out a great problem in the new world. Neither a feudal system nor a nobility interfered; every man was lord of his own domain in Pennsylvania, and this is what gave character to the agricultural classes so early in our history.

The Germans brought with them large "iron bound chests." Nearly every family, if they could be afforded, had one of them. A few of these old chests can be seen yet in this county among their descendants. They were filled with homespuns and some of the most important household utensils. One, two, or more covered wagons, sometimes belonging to the immigrants, but more frequently the property of settlers in eastern counties of a kindred nationality, brought their fellow-countrymen to their place of destination, west of the Susquehanna. In these wagons, including household articles, were stored some of the most essential implements of agriculture, such as the wooden plow, the scythe, the hoe and the sickle. The settlement of a few German colonies can still be located in York County. The

Scotch-Irish brought the ox-team, the horse and the most essential implements. Many of the first Quakers rode from Chester County on pack-horses; the grown and half grown came on foot. Some of the most active went ahead, when passing into an entirely new section, with axes to clear away obstructions. There were in places fallen trees and hanging vines, streams to cross and deep morasses and savannas to wade.

First Farms. Where, to whom, or to what people among the white settlers belongs the honor of breaking ground for the first farms in York County, the truthful historian cannot now chronicle. Immigrants located nearly at the same time in all sections of the county, and took possession of chosen tracts of land so rapidly from the period between 1734 and 1736, that many farms were laid off between those dates. The Scotch-Irish selected their homes in the lower end of the county, and in the Marsh Creek country (now around Gettysburg) on land with similar characteristics to that of the places of their nativity.

The Friends and the Germans, upon emigrating, frequently sent their representatives ahead to locate land. The Germans naturally selected such land as was similar to that from which the more prominent of them came, and hence they fell heir to most of the limestone region, although, as the land warrants show, there were many English who took up land in the valley of the Codorus. They did not long remain in possession of them. Much of the land was taken up by English speculators, who, soon after the first settlements were made, disposed of their rights at a profit, to the German immigrants, who came flocking into this county from 1740 to 1752, in large numbers. There were as many as 2,000 Friends located in the upper end of the county, in Fairview, Newberry, Warrington and adjoining townships before 1760; and they were nearly all farmers, largely from Chester County and Newcastle County, Delaware.

Most of the settlers had some money, with which, after getting the proper warrants, they located lands of their own selection, or purchased them from surveyors, at a very small cost per acre. Much land of

the lower townships was taken up in 400 acre tracts. Some of the settlers of the limestone regions took up large tracts, but as a general rule, nearly all land purchased by settlers was taken up in 100, 200 and sometimes 300 acre tracts. The tradition that the ancestors of people now living, took up 1,000 or more acres, is nearly always at fault, and cannot be verified by the records in the land office. The early surveyors and speculators owned many tracts in York County. Among them were Thomas Cookson, surveyor, of Lancaster; Edward Shippen, of Philadelphia, and Joseph Pidgeon, a surveyor of Philadelphia County, after whom the "Pigeon Hills" were doubtless named. George Stevenson, the intelligent Englishman who for sixteen years was clerk of the courts, prothonotary, register and recorder, all in one office, owned at one time as much as 10,000 acres in York County, much of which he fell heir to when he married the widow of Thomas Cookson, of Lancaster. But the Fates were not propitious with him, for he lost it all by some mishaps, and died poor, in Carlisle, just after the Revolution. Michael Tanner, an intelligent German Baptist, one of the commissioners who laid off York County and afterward located at Hanover as the first justice of the peace, was a very large land owner.

The land in the lower end, then contained many spots of scrub oak, which were left unburned by the Indians, who annually set fire to patches, on some of which they had cultivated corn and beans; and some possibly used as hunting grounds were burned, yet this tradition is of doubtful authenticity. It is far more natural that the Indians burned patches of land for farming purposes, and such is the opinion of the earliest writers of intelligence.

The "York Barrens," which covered a large extent of territory in the lower end, became noted in the annals of York County, long after the period of experimental farming. Much land in the Chancefords, Hopewells, Fawn, Peach Bottom, and parts of Codorus and Manheim, after being cleared of timber, for two or three years produced fair crops of wheat, barley, spelt or corn. It then became poor and would not readily grow these valuable cereals. Rye could be cultivated longer on these lands; finally it

ceased to yield profitably, and then nothing but buckwheat could be made to grow with satisfaction. It was long known as a great buckwheat country. When certain cultivated tracts became sterile, they were deserted, and new tracts cleared and cultivated. This is what gave rise largely to the name "barrens." In the southwestern townships the Germans learned to call them "barns."

The first settlers always located near some spring or gentle running stream of crystal water. Springs were plenty and nature's drink was pure and wholesome. For a few days the covered wagon served as a home, often for more than one family, especially for the women and children. The spreading branches of a large tree afforded shelter until the log cabin, occasionally a stone house, could be built. A few red men visited them and exchanged furs and other articles. Until 1756, during the French and Indian war, their ravages were never feared and the few that remained were on friendly terms with the whites.

Hard and patiently did the settlers go to work, with coats off, arms bare, and sweated brows, to fell the trees and hew the logs for their future homes. Logs were split, notched and appropriately arranged, and then each settler assisted his nearest neighbor to do the heaviest work. The women who endured this new life were not idle. In homespun clothing and plain white caps, with the open air for a kitchen, and a few collected stones for a hearth, after the custom of the gypsy of the present day, they swung, with chain and hooks, the pots and kettles brought from their native land, and prepared the heartily relished food. A large log, a huge rock, or the "end gate" to the emigrant wagon served as a table. Sometimes a huge white oak or chestnut was cut at a proper height, around the stump of which these humble sons of toil gathered to partake of their frugal meals, until better accommodations were provided. The men ate first; the women and children came last. Thanks were silently offered and there was but little profanity. The children wandered into the near woods to observe the new attractions, but not too far from the cabin, lest the voracious wolf or some unfriendly Indian might cause alarm.

The timid deer and the sportive squirrel were frequently added to the larder, and delicious fishes which the aborigines so much loved to catch, were abundant in the Susquehanna, the Codorus, the Conewago and in all the streams. The table of the early settler was frequently supplied with fish, easily caught. The iron fish hook was a necessary article for the emigrant, as was his flint lock gun. The spade and the hoe, necessary tools for the settler, were first brought into requisition, and soon a small patch was cleared and dug and planted with seeds and bulbs, some of which had been brought from across the ocean.

Much timber was split into rails for fences to enclose the newly cleared tracts. The underwood was "grubbed," dragged on heaps and burned, and a large flame from them was a common sight. There were no matches to light them as now. "Punk" and the flint stone were commonly used to ignite wood; or else live coals were brought from the open fires of a neighbor's cabin. The age of stoves had not arrived in York County. The era of forges and furnaces came later. Then, as the season progressed, the old fashioned wooden plow, drawn by the heavy draught horses or a pair of oxen, slowly turned up the soil, most of which for ages unknown, had been undisturbed. It is strange to think that the world existed so many thousand years without her inhabitants even knowing of the richness of the treasures in the western hemisphere. Limbs of trees tied together first served as harrows to level and pulverize the soil. For a few years the same plow was used by two or more farmers. The crops were planted or sown by hand, and covered by a hoe or brushwood. The soil being naturally fertile, crops grew abundantly without fertilizers, and to the frontiersman the first harvest was a great delight.

Many of the Quakers came to York County on pack horses and some of the first wagons they used were made here entirely of wood. The wheels were sawed from the thick trunks of the "gum tree" or the tough "buttonwood." A few of these settlers brought their wagons with them. Spelt, wheat, barley and rye were first cultivated. They were cut with a sickle, threshed with a flail, and among the earliest settlers the chaff was separated from the

grain by both being placed on a linen sheet, of which two persons took hold, and tossing the contents up in a current of air, a gentle breeze would blow the chaff away and leave the precious grain. Corn was shelled with the hand or by flail. Wheat or corn was ground the first year or two in a "pioneer mill"—a mortar hollowed in the end of a log, or a stump, in which it was ground, Indian fashion, with a pestle. Soon after the small grist mill, run by water power, was constructed. The log house when completed was about 10x15 feet and seven feet to the roof, at first covered with heavy bark, and, after the first year's crop, was carefully thatched with straw. There was no cellar. On the garret or "loft," as it was called, was stored the grain of the first year's crop. The next winter was spent by the husband in clearing more land, and taking care of his horse, cow, pigs, and sheep, which were expected to huddle together, and live harmoniously in one common stable. The wife would "ply her evening care" in front of the blazing hearth, on which the glowing "back logs" furnished both light and heat.

Before the first settlement of Frontier York County agriculture had a fair foothold in this province, the domestic animals had been put into use, and all the cultivated plants grown in the mother countries had been tried on American soil. Corn, to the early York County settler, was a new plant, native to America, and cultivated in a small way by the aborigines. Hemp, cotton, rice, spelt, oats, millet, lucerne, flax, rape, rye, oats, barley and buckwheat were all cultivated for a time in York County. The raising of some of these cereals was soon discontinued. Hemp was cultivated a long time, and the old-fashioned "hemp mill" is still remembered. It was cultivated in York County as late as 1830. Flax and its valuable product were known much later. The linsey-woolsey made from linen and woolen thread was used by our ancestors as an article of clothing.

This experimental farming of our ancestors was so successfully tried before the Revolutionary period, that, since then, the introduction of few plants, except sorghum during the Civil war, can now be named.

John Calhoon, Jno. Smith, Thos. Wilson, James Wakely, James Moore, and John McKnight appointed viewers—with power to any four to act.

Peach Bottom Road. In January, 1752, Nathan Morgan, John Griffith, Alexander Wallace, Hugh Whiteford and Archibald White were appointed to "view and lay out a road from Peach Bottom ferry, so called, to York."

They reported at the June session of court that, after viewing said road, are of the opinion that there is necessity for such road; but the season of the year being so unfit for taking courses and distances, and being a very busy time for the farmers, they asked to have the return of the report made at next session of court. The same year the order was granted to open a road to York to join a road from Chanceford to same point already laid out. A temporary private road was laid out from Peach Bottom ferry to join the Ashmore ferry road, in 1749, to York under the authorities of the Lancaster Court before the formation of York County.

The road above mentioned, extending south from York to Smith's patented land, was declared "to be crooked and hilly, and a good wagon road was needed over more level ground." A petition was presented to court in 1765 to extend it to "the temporary line toward Joppa and Potapsco." Joppa, now a small village on the Gunpowder river, a few miles east of Baltimore, was then the most important town in Baltimore County, and the county seat.

The same year, 1752, a road was laid out from George Crogan's place, near the mouth of the Yellow Breeches Creek to Cesna's fording place by Frazer's mill, on same creek; length three and one-third miles. A road was petitioned for in 1752 to pass through Newberry and Warrington from Frazer's mill through the gap in the mountain to intersect the road leading from Rosebury's mill to York between the creeks of Beaver and Conewago. Henry Willis, Allen Robinet, John Farmer, Thomas Heald, and Joseph Bennett viewed and opened it.

Jacob Miller and sundry inhabitants in and around York petitioned for a road from his mill to York. The mill was situated about one mile northeast of York.

In 1753, the inhabitants of Warrington and Paradise secured the opening of a road

from "Christopher Hussey's mill, in Warrington, to John Lane's mill, and from thence through the Pidgeon Hills, so as to fall in the road that leads to Potapsco." Pidgeon Hills were named after Joseph Pidgeon, an English surveyor from Philadelphia County, who assisted in laying off the first townships in York County. Potapsco is now Baltimore.

Alexander McCandless, Nathaniel Morgan and Hugh Whiteford, in 1753, laid out a road from Robert Morton's plantation, in Chanceford, toward Rock Run and the temporary line. Upon the petition of Peter Wolf and sundry persons, the Monocacy road was changed from its course in 1754, to avoid hills, at a distance five miles west from York, where it forks with the Marsh Creek road.

In September, 1754, Conrad Holzbaum, Baltzer Spangler, Henry Hendricks and Hugh Low presented to the court at York, Patrick Watson, president justice, a report of a road review from York, through the townships of York and Shrewsbury to the temporary line between the provinces of Pennsylvania and Maryland. The length of this road, according to their survey, was eighteen and three-quarter miles. Beginning "at the court house door" it extended nearly in a due south direction. The report was confirmed.

Abraham Burkholder established a ferry across the Susquehanna in the year 1762. In 1766 he petitioned for a road from his ferry "to William Nicholson's mill, at the forks of Muddy Creek, and thence to the road leading to Potapsco." The viewers were Thomas Scott, David Kirkpatrick, John McCall, William Edgar and William Gemmill. A road had been laid from Stevenson's ferry (now McCall's) to Read's mill, thence to Leeper's mill, about ten years before.

In October, 1765, "a bridge road was opened from Nicholas Wierman's mill to the great road leading through Warrington from Carlisle to Baltimore, and along said road to the old Friends' meeting house road and along said meeting house road unto Rev. Samuel Thompson's meeting house."

In 1767 a road was opened in Chanceford from "John Finley's tavern house to Jacob Grove's mill, lately erected."

The same year a road was opened from

the "Brogue tavern to Nicholson's mill at the forks of Muddy Creek, thence to temporary line," by David Kirkpatrick, Thomas Scott, John McCally, William Gemmill, Benjamin Johnston and James White.

A petition in 1768, of divers inhabitants of Shrewsbury and Codorus stated that "a road, formerly made by ourselves, which led from Maryland road to the mill of Christian Meckley, was stopped up by Peter Seis and others." William Ehrhart, Frederick Fishel, Michael Geiselman, Peter Runk, Killian Divinger and Moses Lawson were appointed by the court to open the road.

The inhabitants of Fawn and Chanceford, in 1768, stated in petition, that "they needed a road from Samuel Leeper's mill, which is now fitted for merchant work, and has on hand a quantity of flour;" the road to begin "at the great road leading from York to Peach Bottom ferry; to pass between Roland Huss and James Hill to said mill, and from thence to provincial line, where James Webb lives."

On motion of James Smith, Esq., on Canal behalf of Caleb Lowe and others, Road. viewers were appointed April, 1768, to open a road from Lowe's ferry (now York Haven) to intersect the road leading from York to Carlisle." This afterward was known as the "Canal road."

The petition of sundry inhabitants of Newberry and Dover, July, 1768, apprehended that "a road from James Rankin's house to Great Conewago, at or near a place called the wolf pit, and from thence to a ferry on the Susquehanna would be useful." Whereupon the court appointed James Welsh, Esq., John Garretson, Sr., Henry Entzminger, Joseph Hutton, Peter Sneider, and Ellis Lewis to open the road. It was laid out in October. Its length was sixteen miles." It began at Lewisberry and ended at New Holland, on the Susquehanna.

Petitions in 1769 from a number of "Quakers of the townships of Newberry, Warrington, Huntingdon, Tyrone and Menallen, were presented for a road leading westward through the different townships mentioned, for them to pass and repass to and from their different places of worship; to begin at McGraw's mill, thence along by the meeting houses at Huntingdon (York Springs), and Warrington, and to intersect

the road leading from Lowe's ferry to Carlisle, at or near the Newberry meeting house." This road was opened by John Blackburn, Ellis Lewis, Charles Coleson, Robert Nelson, and James Rankin. It terminated near the present village of Newberry. A petition of sundry inhabitants of York County was presented to court, January, 1769, for a road "for the passage of large wagons from Tate's ferry and William Willis' mill into the great road from Carlisle to York near Widow Noblet's house, which would be some miles nearer for the Baltimore trade."

The same year a petition was presented for division of Chanceford and Windsor Townships, and from parts of both to form a new township, to be called Rossel Township; not granted.

In April, 1769, the inhabitants of Hellam, Windsor and Chanceford requested that a road be made from Hellam Forge, at the mouth of the Codorus, across said townships toward Rock Run and Baltimore and join the road already laid out to John Finley's tavern. Viewers were appointed and the road opened. It is still known as the "old Baltimore road."

In 1769 citizens of York and surrounding townships asked for the opening of a road in behalf of Thomas Usher and Joseph Donaldson, who, "at great expense, had erected a merchant mill on the land formerly owned by Zachariah Shugart, near lands of David Jameson, Esq., Henry Spangler and Michael Hanks. This road would be of great advantage to the town of York. The road was opened.

In 1769, in answer to many petitions in behalf of James Cooper, who had built a merchant mill near Peach Bottom; a road was opened from the ferry to said mill.

James Dickson, at April session, 1769, stated that "he had contracted with commissioners and built a bridge across the Little Conewago, at Henry Sturgeon's house, for 100 pounds, and to uphold the same for seven years; at the same time had the verbal promise of the commissioners that they would not see him at a loss, for they said that it would be wrong to let one man suffer by the county. Accordingly they told him to lay his bill of expenses before the grand jury; that nevertheless he had not yet obtained redress." The court

appointed six men to view the bridge, whose report was favorable to the contractor, and the court ordered the county to relieve him. It is doubtful if a contractor would be so favored now.

In July, 1770, a road was opened from Yonerstown (Dover) to George Ilgenfritz's mill, in Dover Township, by Michael Quickel and others.

The same year a road was opened from Hellam iron works, at the mouth of the Codorus, to York.

EARLY FERRIES.

Although the title to lands west of the Susquehanna was not purchased from the Indians until the year 1736, ferries were established across the river before that date. John Harris, an Indian trader, who was stationed at the site of Harrisburg, opened a ferry across the Susquehanna at that place in 1733. It was a very important crossing for the early immigrants who took up lands in the Cumberland Valley and extended their settlements down into the Shenandoah.

In the year 1730 John Wright, an influential settler at the site of Columbia, obtained a charter for a ferry between that point and the York County side. This, too, was an important ferry in colonial days and until the completion of the first bridge across the river, between Columbia and Wrightsville, in 1814. The members of Continental Congress crossed at this ferry in September, 1777, when the seat of government was changed from Philadelphia to York, owing to the defeat of the American army at the battle of Brandywine. During the whole period of the Revolution it was a regular crossing place for troops from Maryland, Virginia and the south in their movement to join the American army under Washington in the Jersey campaigns. In the latter part of December, 1778, about 4,200 British and Hessian prisoners of war, who had been captured with Burgoyne at Saratoga, were brought across the river at this ferry, when they were transferred from Boston to Charlottesville, Va., to prison pens at the latter place. Large flat boats were used, which conveyed a hundred or more persons at one time. These boats were propelled across the Susquehanna with their heavy loads by means of long

poles, which reached to the bottom of the stream while a pilot at the rear guided the boat. General Lafayette and Baron Steuben, on their way to York, during the Revolution, crossed here, and Washington also crossed in a large ferry boat in 1791, when on his way from Mt. Vernon to Philadelphia, and also in 1794, on his return from the Whiskey Insurrection in Western Pennsylvania. For a century or more this crossing place was known as Wright's Ferry, in honor of the Quaker, John Wright, who first opened it.

Anderson's Ferry, extending from Marietta to the York County side, was opened about 1730, and was extensively used in colonial days and later by travelers going from Southern Pennsylvania to Reading, Easton and New York. It was later known as the Glatz Ferry, and terminated on the western side at the picturesque point now known as Accomac. Another early crossing place nearby was known as Vinegar Ferry. Farther up the stream and above the falls at York Haven, Joshua Lowe obtained a patent for a ferry in 1737. Many of the early Quaker settlers crossed here. During the Revolution it was known as Rankin's Ferry, and in 1794, a regiment of Pennsylvania troops crossed here on their way to the Whiskey Insurrection. Near the site of Goldsboro, extending across the river to the Dauphin County side, Nathan Hussey opened a ferry as early as 1738. He was a leader among the first Quaker settlers, and one of the commissioners to lay off York County in 1749. The first band of Quaker settlers west of the Susquehanna crossed the river at this point, in 1734, and took up lands in Newberry Township. This ferry was later moved farther up the stream and has since been known as Middletown Ferry.

Robert Chambers established a ferry across the Susquehanna terminating on the York County side below New Cumberland, in 1735. Many of the Scotch-Irish settlers in the Cumberland Valley crossed the river here. For the through travel from the south this ferry was used extensively before the Revolution. William Chesney, a patriot of the Revolution, for many years owned a ferry which crossed the river below New Market, and died there in 1782, leaving a large estate in York County. The ferry

was then purchased by Michael Simpson, who had served as a lieutenant and later as a captain in the Revolution. After the war he was a brigadier-general of militia and died at his ferry house below New Market in 1813. When the Susquehanna bridge was built at Harrisburg in 1816 this ferry was discontinued.

Col. Thomas Cresap, an influential settler in Maryland, owned a ferry at the mouth of the Susquehanna as early as 1724, and shortly after married the daughter of Thomas Johnson, who had established a temporary ferry at Peach Bottom. When Cresap laid his plans to drive the Germans from their settlements in the valleys east of York, he obtained a Maryland patent for the Blue Rock Ferry, which was about four miles south of Wrightsville. This ferry was continued after the border troubles had ended, and was later known as the Myers and the Drift Ferry, being owned after the Revolution by Capt. Jacob Drift, who was drowned in the Susquehanna, while attempting to cross when the wind was high and the water turbulent. A ferry extended across the river at York Furnace for many years. The river is narrow at this point. Ashmore's, afterwards Nelson's, and still later McCall's Ferry, was the most important crossing place over the Lower Susquehanna for a century and a half. It was opened about 1740. Peach Bottom Ferry was opened under a Pennsylvania patent in 1738, and during the days when the lumber interests along the upper Susquehanna were most extensive, this was a very important crossing place.

BRIDGES.

The first bridge in York County extended across the Codorus Creek at Market Street, York, and was built in 1743. A legal record entered in January, 1768, petitioning for a new stone bridge, says, "The old bridge of wood at High (Market) Street is much decayed; the sills are rotten, so that it is dangerous to cross with heavy wagons." In the same year a stone bridge was built at this place. A wooden bridge across the Conewago, beyond Dover, was built in 1768 and a stone bridge at the same place in 1811.

Under an act of the Legislature approved April 2, 1811, a state appropriation was made to assist chartered companies in the

erection of bridges across the Susquehanna at Harrisburg, at Northumberland and at McCall's Ferry. They were all built by the noted engineer, Theodore Burr, the inventor of the "Burr Bridge Plan." The Harrisburg bridge was commenced in 1812 and completed October, 1816, at a cost of \$192,138. The part of the bridge nearest the city was taken away by the flood of 1846, and a second bridge at a subsequent flood. Mr. Burr and his son, after completing the Harrisburg bridge, commenced the construction of the one at McCall's Ferry, which cost \$150,000. During its short existence, it was considered a remarkable structure, but was taken away by the ice flood of 1817. Theodore Burr, who was born at Torrington, Conn., in 1762, and 1789 married the granddaughter of Captain Cook, the great English navigator, died at Middletown, Dauphin County, November 21, 1822, while superintending the erection of a bridge across the Swatara at that town.

A bridge was built across the Susquehanna at York Furnace in 1855, and taken away by the flood the next year.

The first bridge across the Susquehanna between Wrightsville and Columbia was completed in 1814. It was 5,690 feet long, a little more than a mile in length. It was removed by an ice flood in 1832. The second bridge was a covered wooden structure placed on twenty-three stone piers. It was destroyed by fire by a regiment of Pennsylvania troops at Columbia on the evening of June 28, 1863, to prevent Gordon's brigade of Confederate soldiers from crossing the stream at Wrightsville to the Lancaster County side. This bridge had been used from the year 1838 to the time of its destruction by wagons and carriages and by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. For several years passengers were transported across the river in flat boats. In 1869 the Pennsylvania Railroad Company built a third bridge across the river at this place. This structure was blown down and removed from its piers by a wind storm on September 30, 1896. This also had a driveway for carriages and wagons and a track used by the railroad company for passenger and freight trains. The fourth bridge is 5,375 feet, or a little more than a mile, in length and was built by the Pennsylvania